

Application No. 09/634,185

Filed: August 9, 2000

TC Art Unit: 2643

Confirmation No.: 5742

REMARKS

In response to an Office Action mailed on June 4, 2004, Applicant respectfully requests that the above-listed Amendments be entered and that the Application be reconsidered in light of these amendments and the following remarks. Claims 2 and 3 are canceled; claims 4-7, 12-19, 21 and 23 are amended; claims 20 and 24 are previously presented; and claims 33-47 are new. Thus, claims 4-7, 12-21, 23-24, and 33-47 are presented for examination. Of these, claim 15 is independent and the remaining claims are dependent.

The Examiner rejected claims 15, 2-7, 12-14, 16, 17, 20, 21 and 23-24 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Pat. No. 6,404,764 to Jones, et al. ("Jones") in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,933,775 to Peters ("Peters") or U.S. Pat number 5,991,387 to Shaffer, et al. ("Shaffer"). In addition, the Examiner rejected claims 18-19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Jones in view of Peters or Shaffer and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,661,893 to Vaughn, et al. ("Vaughn").

Jones discloses an Internet protocol telephone system that enables users to place and received Internet-based calls via the users' existing plain old telephone service (POTS) equipment and house wiring. Jones discloses using existing house wiring as an in-premises POTS network 20 to interconnect a number of POTS telephones 26. The in-premises POTS network 20 is connected via an RJ-41 type interface 22 to a network premises gateway 10. The network premises gateway 10 is connected between the POTS network 20 on one side and a public switched telephone network (PSTN) interface unit 18 and (optionally) and Internet access device 14 on the other side. (Fig. 3; col. 2, lines 34-36.)

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In contrast, a communications outlet, according to the present Application, can be used to connect data devices (such as a computer) to a premises data infrastructure, such as existing house wiring or a wireless network. Such a communications outlet can be mounted in an outlet box, a wall or an electrical wiring raceway to provide a convenient way for a user to connect (for example) the computer to the premises data infrastructure. The premises data infrastructure is used to connect the data device(s) to premises equipment, such as other communications outlets, a LAN, a print server, etc. Thus, even if, *arguendo*, Jones's in-premises POTS network 20 is analogized to the claimed premises interface circuitry, Jones's network premises gateway 10 is connected to the opposite side of the in-premises POTS network from user devices than the claimed communications outlet. Furthermore, it is believed that Jones does not disclose key elements of the claimed invention, as discussed below.

Jones does not disclose a housing having a faceplate portion and a second portion configured for attachment to an outlet box, an opening of a wall or an electrical wiring raceway, as recited in amended claim 15. Jones's premises gateway 10 is centrally located in a home to provide a "whole-home IP telephone system." According to Jones, the network premises gateway 10 is connected to an in-premises POTS network 20 via a "breakout" box, "fan out" box or splitter 24. The telephones in the premises are connected together by the POTS network 20, and the entire POTS network is connected via a single RJ-41 connector to the network premises gateway 10. (Fig. 3., col. 2, lines 49-54.) Thus, it would be illogical to place more than one of Jones's premises gateways 10 in a home. In contrast, the claimed communications outlet is

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designed so several such outlets can be installed throughout a house to provide convenient access to a premises data infrastructure.

Jones's network premises gateway 10 does not include user interface circuitry for communicating with user equipment including a user data device, as recited in claim 15. Jones's network premises gateway 10 is disclosed as communicating only with user telephone devices. Jones does not disclose connecting any form of user data device to the network premises gateway 10.

Furthermore, Jones does not disclose a bridge, as recited in claim 15. Jones's network premises gateway 10 does not need a bridge, because the gateway 10 provides a POTS interface, not a computer network interface, to user devices. If the gateway 10 included a bridge, it would not be able to provide the POTS interface.

Peters discloses using a control computer to provide advanced telephony features, such as caller ID, inter-telephone intercom and voice-activated dialing, to a plurality of telephone sets using existing telephone wiring. Peters discloses providing an audio channel and a control channel between the control computer and the telephone sets over a wireless link.

Shaffer discloses monitoring multiple telephone channels. When all the channels are occupied, priority is given to at least one of an incoming call and an established call.

Vaughn discloses a telephone loop monitoring and isolation device. The device provides loop isolation if voltage across the loop falls below a predetermined level or if the loop is short-circuited.

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None of the art of record, either individually or in combination, is believed to disclose or suggest the combination recited in claim 15. Thus, claim 15 is believed to be allowable.

Claims 4-7, 12-14, 16-21, 23-24, and 33-47 depend directly or indirectly from claim 15. These claims are, therefore, believed to be allowable, for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 15.

For all the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the present Application is in a condition for allowance, and such action is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned attorney to discuss any matter that would expedite allowance of the present Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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